

S P E E C H

OF

HON. W. J. HEACOCK,

OF

FULTON AND HAMILTON,

**In Favor of a Vigorous Prosecution of the War—Sustaining the Administration
in its Emancipation Policy, and Advocating an Extensive and
General Use of the Negro in the Army and Navy.**

In Assembly, April 6th, 1863.

ALBANY:
WEED, PARSONS & COMPANY, PRINTERS.
1863.

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2011 with funding from

The Institute of Museum and Library Services through an Indiana State Library LSTA Grant

SPEECH.

MR. SPEAKER:

These are epochs in the histories of most nations that may be considered the turning points of their careers—times when they are imperatively called upon by circumstances and events to decide upon some untried system of action—some new plan of operations—some course of development that will change the whole direction in which they have been previously tending. Such for instance was the adoption of Christianity as the religion of the Roman Empire. Such the time when the Great Charter (from which political liberty and constitutional government flow) was wrung from King John of England. Such the events that preceded the French Revolution, and a score or a hundred instances might be accumulated where new combinations of events produce sudden changes in a nation's history—sharp angles in a previously smooth and straight course. And such events, such turning points, are generally the beginnings of a rapidly downward or a rapidly upward course—a wrong choice leads to decay and ultimate ruin, a right one to ever increasing glory and power.

I believe, Mr. Speaker, that we have fallen upon such an epoch in our history. Several ways are before us, in any of which we may go—but upon the wisdom of our choice depends the future, not only of our Government, but that infinitely greater matter, whether Republican Government is a possibility. The magnitude of these subjects that occupy us, and their wide spread influence, reaching beyond the bounds of our continent, and to times when we shall be forgotten—should take these questions out of the domain of party politics and place them on

the broad basis of the common good. There may be times when party or local interests are of importance enough to occupy us, when questions of the hour or the day may rightly absorb us. But this is not the time, for we are debating about the interest of all time, and the very life of this Government.

I have been pained, Mr. Speaker, to hear Hon. Gentlemen in the course of debate say, that men have suffered unduly or been neglected greatly, because they were not of the Administration party. Why, Sir, a sufficient answer to such caviling would be to point to every list of honored names in the service of the Government—whether in the field or the Cabinet, to find appointments of the Administration occupying the highest places—men who did their utmost to elect opposing candidates. True, some of these men have been removed, but their places have been filled in no instance by men of the same political views with the Administration. Gen. McClellan, a Breckinridge Democrat, is replaced by Burnside, another Breckinridge Democrat. There never has been, since the days of John Quincy Adams, a more liberal and impartial party in power.

The Government has recognized from the beginning, that the issues were national, and has impartially placed men of all creeds in power—if they gave any evidence that the nation held the first place in their affections. It has not always been successful, I am sorry to say, in finding national men, but it has done its utmost to do so.

When this storm of war burst upon us, Mr. Speaker, we were, as a nation, enjoying the fairest heritage that had ever fallen to the lot of

man. Just glance at our situation and our privileges beyond any other people on which the sun shines. We take the child and we fit him to be a citizen; we have a system of education, free to all, extending far enough in all branches of learning to fit a man for the highest positions of the land; and when he becomes a man we open paths to power and wealth and happiness such as no other nation does.

The burden of government—that which presses so heavily on the older nations—was scarcely felt by us. We hardly knew we had a General Government, except when we were called upon to select our rulers, or when we felt its protecting arm about us. While the citizens of Continental Europe were groaning under the burden of a military service that demanded the best years of a young man's life, our young men were advancing rapidly in honorable and useful careers; and even in youth attaining distinction. While Europeans were kept poor by taxation to furnish pensions and places for titled paupers, Americans were amassing fortunes—at the same time living far more expensively than the same classes in the old world. Here every man may aspire to any and every office, with the sole exceptions that the two highest are reserved for the natives of the country. The farmer boy or the mechanic may one day rank with kings. What a career does this open to Americans! What self-respect does it engender! While everywhere else, there are impassible barriers that hedge a man within the rank and station in which he is born; and he might as well attempt to change a law of nature as to pass them. Every avenue to wealth is as open as those to distinction. The palaces of Fifth Avenue are to-day inhabited by those who were once poor men, or by children of such. And life and property, in addition to all these privileges, were secured to all, and that with a liberty to each that approached almost to license; and the broad shield of the nation sheltered her citizens everywhere. Our Government, like nature, gave with an open hand. All treasures, all distinctions, all power, were lavished upon her citizens, and ample protection in the enjoyment of all. Such was our position—such our glorious heritage—now put in jeopardy by this most unjustifiable rebellion.

For all these, Mr. Speaker, are at stake in the extremest peril while we are debating. The very object of the leaders of this rebellion is to overturn the principles from which these blessings flow—and institute something else for them, what that something is, you well know. A government in which the laborer or producer shall be a slave, if black, held as such—if white, esteemed and treated as such. If we allow this great inheritance to be lost—the hand that registered human progress on the dial of time goes back a century—and the eyes of the oppressed of all lands, who look to this free country as a refuge for themselves or their children, must turn away blinded with their tears, and the lean and hungry hands, that have time and again been

stretched out to us for food and been filled must drop down in weakness, and despair.

Where shall liberty find another house if this be destroyed? Where another people if we are false to the trust? The very questions make us sick at heart, because we have no cheering answer.

But, Mr. Speaker, our business is to preserve these threatened institutions and blessings threatened on every side by open foes and false friends—by those arrayed against us in the field, and those in our council chambers—and the only question of all our deliberations, is how shall we best do it? We must act decidedly for they are in great peril—already within the current of a Niagara—sweeping on to the remorseless gulf with ever increasing speed, and the point beyond which it is impossible to save them may soon be past.

I believe, from my heart, Mr. Speaker, that the only possible way is by war, I have to see the first proposition for a peace, or a truce, or a convention, that does not practically yield the whole object for which the rebellion was begun by our enemies; and with yielding these objects, comes the destruction of everything we have heretofore held dear—not only the blessings that I have enumerated, but the principles that underlie them, and besides these, that which man holds dearer than any earthly thing—Honor. All is lost save honor, said the French King, when the battle went against him. But we, if we yield to rebellion, will not even have that comfort.

Mr. Speaker, I deprecate war as much as any man—quite as much as the most ardent lover of peace—far more than many who are now crying peace, peace, at any price. My whole nature abhors the bloodshed and misery that mark war's path, and the blackened and desolated track it leaves behind. But there are some things I love more than those which war destroys, and those are the very institutions and blessings that would be destroyed if the rebellion should triumph.

I love the principles that elevate humanity more than I hate war—and I accept war, with all its horrors, as the least of the evils presented to us. Any acquaintance with the principles for which the rebels contend, must convince gentlemen that we must conquer or be conquered. And to be successful in preserving our country, war must be vigorously conducted. It must be as sharp as the sword—as vigorous as the very onset of battle. To falter is to fail; to temporize is to court destruction; as well might one of our brave brigades pause as they rushed on towards the death-dealing battery. Our great mistake has been in supposing our enemies were as desirous as we to arrive at some plan of compromise or conciliation—and those who have proposed such plans here, have thus far only earned the contempt of traitors. We commenced the war in the spirit of an indignant parent, who expects that severely frowning upon his rebellious children will be sufficient to bring them to repentance, and when that was mistaken for cowardice by them, it was thought a little whole-

some chastisement would do the business. The mischances of our first battles confirmed them in all their boasted self-esteem. But after every victory that has followed, the Government has paused to allow these misguided children an opportunity to repent and return. If we had followed up victories as we would have done with a foreign foe, I have no doubt this rebellion would have been long since crushed. We have treated doubly-dyed traitors, when they fell into our power, with "distinguished consideration." Spies have the oath of allegiance administered to them, or are confined for a week or two. These courses have the novelty of being entirely new in the history of revolutions and rebellions, and I have no doubt have strengthened this one, and encouraged men to become traitors.

Such means would fail in surpressing any rebellion, even a petty one, and, of course, would fail to master a Giant, such as that with which we are contending. They must be treated in all respects as we would a foreign foe, to be conquered. Let the blight of war fall on everything that would help them or strengthen them. Grasp remorselessly and hold whatever will weaken them by being held. This is what I call vigorous war. They have set us an example. Ships, forts, custom houses, all United States property, all private property of Unionists, and even all debts due to Northern creditors, were all seized, and that they might be a unit in sentiment, Union men were exiled by public proclamation. (Proclamation of Jeff. Davis, August 11, 1861.)

I would not, of course, go to such an extent, but they give us useful hints on a vigorous prosecution of the war, and I quote their conduct for the benefit of those that sympathize with them and still whine about the mild measures of the United States Government.

This introduces, Mr. Speaker, what I wish to speak of particularly. The Proclamation, as one of the just and necessary means for the vigorous prosecution of the war; and also the other means comprised in the resolutions on which I speak—the use of the colored men of the country as soldiers.

1st. As regards the Proclamation, I leave all legal questions involved in it to lawyers, with this single remark, that war gives the right over all the property of the enemy that may be of use to us in the prosecution of the war, and the loss or destruction of which would weaken them.

I will regard the Proclamation simply as a war measure—one of the means for weakening an enemy and strengthening ourselves. It weakens our enemies by awakening the chronic fear in the southern mind of negro insurrection. Say what they will on the subject, such a fear has existed for years. Their public speeches show it. Their laws show it. It has been the great night-mare of the southern states. They have universally given as a reason for allowing no discussion of the subject of slavery, "we are living over a mine." They have rifled post-offices in search of objectionable papers and documents, because of this fear. They have enacted the sternest laws, and committed cruel outrages on

those suspected of abolition sentiments—all because of this fear.

The Proclamation will awaken this fear in every soldier's mind, absent from his home, and lead to desertion; and it will lead those who are at home to resist the conscription. We have already had evidence of this. The Richmond papers say that executions for desertion are now so common as to excite no remark; and yet, in every account we get from Rebel armies, desertions are spoken of as frequent; and though disgust for the cause, and disgust with the service, are doubtless impelling motives, fear for those at home mingles with them.

I do not believe it will cause a single insurrection. The negroes know too much—isolated as they are, and unarmed and unorganized, to attempt what they feel can only be accomplished by numbers and skill and discipline. But the vague fear of it will thin the armies of our enemies. Again, it weakens them by encouraging slaves to come within the United States lines, and thus take from them the strong hands they so much need, and strengthen us by the addition of them.

Last summer slaves came into Gen. Burnside's lines from the western part of the state—some from over 200 miles, traveling all the way in the night, and living on berries—and that with the bare chance of being free. When the certainty of Freedom travels to all parts of the land, as it no doubt has by this time—by those strange and secret methods the slaves have of rapidly communicating with each other, every able-bodied man, not in the path of our armies, will be irresistibly tempted to make a bold dash for freedom. Only the weak and the aged and young will remain, who will be sources of weakness, instead of strength, to our enemies.

Again, the forts of the South have been built by the slaves. The food for those that man them raised by slave labor. The cannon that fortify them paid for by that labor. The powder and shell that repulsed our brave troops at Big Bethel and Bull Run, and Vicksburg and Fredericksburg was paid for by the cotton that slaves raised. They could not have been purchased without that labor.

Here again the Proclamation tends to weaken them and strengthen us. Every man induced by it to escape, is a strong arm taken from the corn or the cotton field, and by so much diminishing the food raised, and the means of buying improved rifles and cannon and the latest and most destructive forms of ammunition, which our neutral friends are so willing to furnish for cotton.

The importance of this head of my argument cannot be exaggerated. It was this very advantage of which our enemies boasted in the beginning of the rebellion. They said their slaves could feed their armies and raise cotton enough to cloth them, and supply them with everything requisite for the field, while the white men could fight.

In the North, they said, white men must do

the work, and hence many would be taken from the field.

All the labor that wears out the soldier, that brings on disease that fills up the hospitals—and it is a matter of statistics that more than three men are disabled by sickness to one by the casualties of the battle field—all this labor has been performed in the Rebel army by negroes, and the consequent saving of the strength and the life of the soldier has been incalculable. Every fortification, of any importance, has been mainly constructed by them, and I suppose it would be a low estimate to say that the work of one negro on a fortification would cost the lives of three Union soldiers to take.

At the battle of Big Bethel, the first fight where the enemy fought behind fortifications, one rebel soldier was killed and five wounded (authority of a clergyman in the South), while the Union dead was officially returned as 16 killed and 34 wounded; and this was at the time supposed to be below the actual loss—a ratio of 16 to 1; and at the last great battle at Fredericksburg, the official returns are, United States soldiers killed and wounded, 10,233; Rebel, 2,600, a ratio of four to one—all owing to fortifications put up mainly by negro labor. Now, the Proclamation offers the greatest inducements to flee from such labor. If we add to the numbers that are lost to them by it, the white men necessary to prevent the remaining slaves from absconding, and those that must take the places of the runaways in the work of the field and the camp, and on the other hand foot up the saving of health and men to the armies of the Union, by the labor of the slaves that come to us, we will find a very large and cheering balance in our favor through the Proclamation—large in the number of men whose health and lives have been saved by its effects, and cheering by the diminished numbers of heart-broken widows and orphans throughout the land.

You see, Mr. Speaker, of how much benefit the Proclamation will no doubt be, regarding it a purely war measure, leaving entirely out of the discussion other aspects of it, simply looking at it as a necessity to a vigorous prosecution of the war; and such a prosecution requires us to use all means allowable in war to strengthen ourselves and weaken our enemies. If we leave this source of strength to them it would be like leaving them armies, which we might capture, fortifications which we might destroy, arsenals which we might use for our own benefit. For the hands that make an army twice as valuable as it would be without them, are equal to the army. Those that double the destructiveness of muskets and cannon are of equal value of muskets and cannon. Could we take from the South her slaves, the rebellion would soon collapse of itself. Bread, and meat and cotton, which the chivalry could not demean themselves to raise, are its daily food. The rains would wash down their fortifications and there would be no hands to raise them again. If we take their slaves, we take all these things from them, and we take them just in the ratio in which their able bodied men come into our lines.

And the Proclamation removes what is everywhere conceded to have been the cause of the rebellion. No one denies that it was undertaken to build up the waning cause of slavery; the highest authorities of the Rebels proclaim this. It is true their ambassadors to England and France try to create a different impression, that it was to establish free trade. But an ambassador was long ago defined to be “a man lying abroad for his country’s good,” and Messrs. Mason and Slidell have, in this respect, come up fully to the definition of an ambassador.

Slavery is the corner-stone of their confederacy, and if we can remove that, the whole edifice will tumble into ruins.

However the war may end, the Proclamation kills slavery. There can be no more recognition of it by us in any way. The Rebels have proclaimed that they must have a homogeneous nation. We have done the same thing. They mean all slaves. We all free. And, in the estimation of President Jefferson, the character of the Almighty Himself is in harmony with our views. “For,” says he—in view of difficulties with the slave population, in case they should ever rise to assert their liberty—“there is no attribute of the Almighty that can be with us (the South) in such a contest.” He who would be permanently successful, Mr. Speaker, does well to work in harmony with the laws of God. After this war is over, no other can arise from similar causes. The Government is cutting out the cancer completely. Allowed to remain, it would be a ceaseless cause of strife and bloodshed. This would be far more the case in the future than in the past, because the war has petrified men’s opinions on this subject, and with great hostility to the whole institution. Besides all the Proclamation will do for this generation, we are earning the eternal gratitude of our descendants. When we remove slavery, we remove from their counsels a continual cause of agitation—a source of unceasing and unnumbered miseries.

A second means for a vigorous prosecution of the war is found in the use of the million slaves (made freemen by the Proclamation) as soldiers, as fast as they come within our jurisdiction; also the colored men of the country who are free-born.

Before entering on the discussion of the propriety and the necessity of this, as an element in the vigorous prosecution of the war, I would ask the patience of this House while I turn to the practice of this country in the past; also that of other countries in the past and present. I do this because the opponents of this measure treat it as though it were some new experiment, heretofore unheard of in the history of wars. I expect, however, they will soon come right on this subject, as they are doing on almost all others. This wheeling into line of battle with the armies of the Union, of those who have been enemies of the Government, is a grand proof, Mr. Speaker, of the progress of Truth. Abundant evidence could be collected to show that in the old world none of the distinctions of race and color existed.

Men rose to the highest offices in the Roman empire, by their ability, no matter where born. In the Turkish empire (which included what is now the territory of the Pasha of Egypt, down to the time of the late revolution there), the only requirement in the army is one of religious faith: all must be Mohammedans. And in the rebellion that wrested Egypt from the dominion of Turkey, the soldiers of the rebel chief were negroes, just as much so as any on a southern plantation; and such was their fighting abilities that the European Powers, you remember, had to interfere to prevent them from overrunning the Empire, and their chief from making himself master of Constantinople. I need quote no authorities, because I am only relating the history of what has occurred in our own time.

It is some of this same class, perhaps some of the same men, that have been lent to the Emperor of the French.

"In the House of Commons on the 22d ultimo, Mr. Buxton called attention to the deportation of a negro regiment from Egypt by the Emperor of the French, which he characterized as a most base and evil proceeding, and worse than a revival of the slave trade.

"Lord Palmerston said the transaction was not only very irregular and unfortunate, but in some of its details liable to stronger censure than his friend applied to it. The facts of the case were as follows: The Emperor of the French, on account of the mortality of the French troops in Mexico, had desired to enlist a force of Africans for service there, but the Pashaw of Egypt at once went beyond this request. A regiment of Nubians was marched down to Alexandria, and forthwith shipped on board a French frigate before they knew why or where they were going. This was not the intention of the French Emperor, who only wished to enlist Africans voluntarily, but the conduct of the Egyptian sovereign was exactly similar in violence and cruelty to that which had been committed at Warsaw. He, however hoped that the French Government, which had expressed its strong dislike to what had been done at Warsaw, would feel that this was exactly the same, or rather worse, in cruelty, for the Nubians were carried to an unhealthy climate; and he trusted that they would as far as possible repair the wrong. Her Majesty's government had expressed an opinion to this effect to the French Government."

In the war of the revolution the British used slaves freed by Proclamation. (Force's American Archives, 4 series, vol. III, p. 1385, quoted by Livermore, pages 134 and 135.)

The Proclamation of Lord Dunmore was as follows:

"By his Excellency the Right Honorable JOHN, Earl of DUNMORE, his Majesty's Lieutenant and Governor-General of the Colony and Dominion of Virginia, and Vice-Admiral of the same,—

"A PROCLAMATION.

"As I have ever entertained hopes that an accommodation might have taken place between Great Britain and this Colony, without being compelled by my duty to this most disagreeable but now absolutely necessary step, rendered so by a body of armed men, unlawfully assembled, firing on his Majesty's tenders; and the formation of an army, and that army now on their march

to attack his Majesty's troops, and destroy he well-disposed subjects of this Colony,—to defeat such treasonable purposes, and that all such traitors and their abettors may be brought to justice, and that the peace and good order of this Colony may be again restored, which the ordinary course of the civil law is unable to effect, I have thought fit to issue this my Proclamation; hereby declaring, that, until the aforesaid good purposes can be obtained, I do, in virtue of the power and authority to me given by his Majesty, determine to execute martial law, and cause the same to be executed, throughout this Colony. And, to the end that peace and good order may the sooner be restored, I do require every person capable of bearing arms to resort to his Majesty's standard, or be looked upon as traitors to his Majesty's Crown and Government, and thereby become liable to the penalty the law inflicts upon such offences,—such as forfeiture of life, confiscation of lands, &c., &c. And I do hereby further declare all indentured servants, negroes, or others, (appertaining to rebels,) free, that are able and willing to bear arms, thereby joining his Majesty's troops, as soon as may be, for the more speedily reducing this Colony to a proper sense of their duty to his Majesty's Crown and dignity. I do further order and require all his Majesty's liege subjects to retain their quit-rents, or any other taxes due, or that may become due, in their own custody, till such time as peace may be again restored to this at present most unhappy country, or demanded of them, for their former salutary purposes, by officers properly authorized to receive the same.

"Given under my hand, on board the ship 'William,' off Norfolk, the seventh day of November, in the sixteenth year of his Majesty's reign."

"DUNMORE."

Some of them took their own masters prisoners, in fair and open fight, (Livermore 136.) And in the present time negro soldiers are used successfully by the Spaniards in Cuba, the Portuguese on the coast of Africa, the Dutch on the gold coast (Africa), the French in their colony of Senegal; the Danes in St. Croix; the Brazilians in South America, and the English in their possessions in the West Indies, Africa and Hindoostan. I quote from a paper read by the Hon. Charles B. Sedgwick, Member of Congress from this State, read before that body in 1862, and said to have been prepared by one of our own librarians in this city. (Livermore H. R., Appendix, E.)

NEGRO SOLDIERS UNDER MONARCHICAL GOVERNMENTS.

"The monarchical governments of Europe and America, those that tolerate slavery and those that do not, alike agree in employing negroes armed for the public defence. They find that the burdens of war, and the sacrifice of life it occasions, are too great to be borne by the white race alone. They call upon the colored races, therefore, to share in the burden, and to encounter, in common with the whites, the risks of loss of life.

"Thus we find, that in the Spanish colony of Cuba, with a population one-half slaves and one-sixth colored, a militia of free blacks and mulattoes was directed by Gen. Pezuela (Governor-General) to be organized in 1854 throughout the island; and it was put upon an equal footing with regard to privilege, with the regular army. This measure was not rescinded by Governor-General Concha in 1855; but the black and mulatto troops have been made a permanent corps of the Spanish army. (Condensed in the very phrases of Thrasher's preface to his edition of Humboldt's Cuba.)

"In the Portuguese colonies on the coast of Africa, the regiments are chiefly composed of black men. At Prince's Island, the garrison consists of a company of regular artillery of eighty, and a regiment of black militia of ten hundred and fifty-eight rank and file, of which the colonel is a white man. At St. Thomas's, there are two regiments of black militia. In Loando, the Portuguese can, on an emergency of war with the natives, bring into the field twenty-five thousand partially civilized blacks, armed with muskets. Successful expeditions have actually been made with five thousand of

them, accompanied with three or four hundred white soldiers.—*From Valdez's Six Years on the West Coast of Africa.* London; 1861. Two vols. 8vo.

"In the Dutch colony of the Gold Coast of Africa, with a population of one hundred thousand, the garrison of the fortress consists of two hundred soldiers (whites, mulattoes, and blacks), under a Dutch colonel.

"In the capital of the French colony of Senegal, on the same coast, at St. Louis, the defence of the place is in the hands of eight hundred white and three hundred black soldiers. (The preceding facts are also from *Valdez*.)

"In the Danish island of St. Croix, in the West Indies, for more than twenty-five years past, there have been employed two corps of colored soldiers, in the presence of slaves.—*From Tuckerman's Santa Cruz.*

"In Brazil, notwithstanding its three million slaves, its monarchical government employs all colors and races in the military service, either by enlistment or forcible seizure. The police of the city of Rio de Janeiro is a military organization, composed mostly of colored men, drilled and commanded by army officers. The navy is principally manned by civilized aborigines.—*Hidder: Eubank.*

"The course pursued by the British Government in Jamaica, Sierra Leone, and Hindostan, is so notorious, as simply to need to be mentioned.

"In Turkey, no distinction of color or race is made, in the ranks of the regular army. Distinction is made however, on the ground of difference of faith. The army is composed of Mahomedans. Christians and Jews are never recruited. The result is one which the government of Turkey to-day contemplates with alarm. For the last two hundred years, having been frequently engaged in war, her Mahomedan population has been greatly reduced thereby; while her Christian population, at one time greatly inferior in numbers, has now, by peace, so extraordinarily increased, as to bid fair soon to divide the empire. And she dare not now in her strength, arm them as her soldiers as conscripts, notwithstanding her desire to do it."

These negroes are used by several of these powers in connection with white people, enjoying the same privileges and on the same footing, and several of these powers are slaveholding nations, with all the prejudices against the race that slaveholding people have, wherever the question of admitting negroes to any thing like an equality is concerned.

In Cuba half the population are slaves yet they use them. And in slaveholding Brazil, the very police of the Capitol is composed mostly of colored men, organized as a military body and officered by white men.

This is sufficient to show what other nations think of this matter, and to demonstrate that they are not too proud to share the privileges or the burden, (whichever it is considered) of military service with the colored race.

But let us turn to our own experience in our Revolutionary struggle, and in the war of 1812, and see how the patriots of those days thought and acted.

I like exceedingly, Mr. Speaker, in these days when men are so very careful about the honor of our nation—when they are so afraid we will sully our fair fame by the means we use in putting down an unscrupulous set of traitors—I like exceedingly to be able to point to Revolutionary examples, because there is no question about the patriotism of those times. It was tried in the furnace, and came out purer and brighter for the trial. We have all seen engraved copies of Trumbull's picture of the battle of Bunker Hill, and no doubt observed the colored man who is such a prominent figure in it.

Some of us may have thought it an artistic license the painter took in giving him a place in his picture. Others, perhaps, that he wished to introduce all classes; and, as the colored man was a peculiar feature of America, he introduced two or three. But, Mr. Speaker, the artist was an eye-witness of the scene, and only introduced a historical fact, for the colored men fought side by side with the white men on that eventful day, and the one there introduced did good work in the cause of freedom. The figure was meant for Peter Salem, who slew the British Major of Marines—Pitcairn—as he mounted the low rampart and summoned the patriots to surrender.

Peter had been a slave up to that time. He served through the war, and was respected and honored after it closed. ("Washburn's History of Leicester," Historical Researches, p. 120.) Prescott, Putnam and Warren, the chiefs of that memorable fight, did not feel dishonored by the presence of the slave, and the eloquent Everett does not consider him as too ignoble to be honorably mentioned when he eulogizes the heroes of that day. (Orations and Speeches, Vol. 3, p. 229.)

A superficial examination of the records of those times reveals this: That every State in the Union, except Georgia and South Carolina, employed negroes as soldiers in greater or less numbers. In the majorities of the States they were mingled up with the white men. But in one State at least, and probably more than one, they were formed into a separate brigade and officered by white men, as is proposed by the Government at present.

At first there seems to have been no particular policy on the subject. In the early struggles the black men caught up any weapon they could find and hurried into the conflict just as the white man did. After a time, as their numbers increased it became necessary to have some defined course with reference to them. At first there was decided opposition to them on the part of military and civil officers. Congress even passed a resolution against admitting them (which, however, never went into force). Then there followed a period of unsettled opinion. But at last the policy was adopted of using them, the different States having different laws on the subject. But in general where they were free born they had all the rights and privileges of white soldiers. That of promotion, they received bounty, and the survivors were pensioned at the close of the war. When slaves, they were freed if they served through the war. Their bounties went to their masters as compensation for their loss, but they themselves received a sum of money when the contest was over, as a reward, and in place of pension.

I will give, Mr. Speaker, the action of several of the States on this question, so that the precedent of using negroes as soldiers may be clearly established by the practice of the men whom we all delight to honor. But previous to doing so, I would call your attention to the fact that the opposition to their use came mainly from the

States in which there were the greatest number of Tories. Then, as now, it was those who wished to see our Government unsuccessful who were opposed to the measure. Thus, in South Carolina and Georgia, where it was questionable if the tories were not in the majority, they were never used as soldiers, only as pioneers and laborers, and given as bounties to such white men as would enlist, although such eminent citizens of South Carolina as Laurens and Huger, as well as a delegation from the State, favored the project, and some of them labored long and earnestly to accomplish it. (Secret Journals of Congress, Vol. 1, pp. 107 to 110, H. R.)

The opposition of South Carolina is seen in the records of Congress, according to Mr. Bancroft, as early as September, 1775. On the 26th of that month, "Edward Rutledge of South Carolina moved the discharge of all the negroes in the army, and he was strongly supported by many of the Southern delegates; but the opposition was so powerful and so determined that he lost his point." (H. R., p. 129.)

During the following month, a committee consisting of delegates from Connecticut, Rhode Island and Massachusetts, together with General Washington, decided not to enlist any negroes in the new regiments. (Force's Archives, 4th Series, Vol. 3, p. 1161, H. R., p. 130.) And yet Washington himself violates this very rule two months after this. On December 31, 1775, he writes the following note to the President of Congress, from his headquarters, Cambridge.

"It has been represented to me that the free negroes who have served in this army are very much dissatisfied at being discarded. As it is to be apprehended that they may seek employment in the Ministerial army, I have presumed to depart from the resolution respecting them, and have given license for their being enlisted. If this is disapproved of by Congress, I will put a stop to it." (Sparks' Washington, Vol. 3, pp. 218, 219, H. R., 131.)

Two weeks after this Congress thus decided the question by resolution:

"That the free negroes who have served faithfully in the army at Cambridge, may be re-enlisted therein, but no others." (Journals of Congress, Vol. 2, p. 26, H. R., p. 131.)

We thus see the growth of opinion in the first days of the struggle. But as the war advanced, the opinion in favor of their use became general.

In the General Assembly of Connecticut the whole subject was discussed in May, 1777. A committee reported in favor of allowing the whole effective force of negro and mulatto slaves in the State to enlist with the Continental battalions then raising. (H. R., p. 146.) This report was ordered to be continued to the next session by the lower House, but the upper House rejected it. But at this same session an act was passed exempting from draft any two men who should procure one able-bodied recruit during the term of his enlistment, and the color of these recruits or substitutes never interfered with their reception by the officers. White or black, bond or free, if able-bodied, went down on the rolls together; and at the next session of the legislature more direct encouragement was given to the enlistment of slaves, by allowing him to go as a substitute, and at the same time secure

his freedom. As no distinction was made on the rolls between white and black, it will never be possible to tell how many took advantage of these offers. The only guide is the name; and in turning over the rolls of the common troops, scores of such surnames as Liberty, Freeman, and Freedom, can be found, together with many others, exclusively appropriated to negroes and slaves.

After the war was over, pensions were drawn by these men just as though they had been white. (H. R., pp. 146, 47 and 48.) Such was the action of Connecticut.

In the State of Rhode Island colored men were enlisted indiscriminately with white, as in the other states. But Rhode Island went further, and formed a separate regiment of black men. The terms of the act are: "Every able-bodied negro, mulatto, or Indian slave in this State, may enlist into either of the said battalions to serve during the continuance of the present war with Great Britain; that every slave so enlisted shall be entitled to, and receive all the bounties, wages, and encouragements allowed by the Continental Congress to any soldier enlisting in their service." (H. R., p. 153, &c.)

The remaining portion of the act is as follows:

"It is further Voted and Resolved, That every slave so inlisting shall, upon his passing muster before Col. Christopher Greene, be immediately discharged from the service of his master or mistress, and be absolutely FREE, as though he had never been incumbered with any kind of servitude or slavery. And in case such slave shall, by sickness or otherwise, be rendered unable to maintain himself, he shall not be chargeable to his master or mistress, but shall be supported at the expense of the state.

"And whereas slaves have been by the laws deemed the property of their owners; and therefore compensation ought to be made to the owners for the loss of their service,—

"It is further Voted and Resolved, That there be allowed, and paid by this state to the owner, for every such slave so inlisting, a sum according to his worth; at a price not exceeding one hundred and twenty pounds for the most valuable slave, and in proportion for a slave of less value: *Provided* the owner of said slave shall deliver up to the officer who shall inlist him the clothes of the said slave; or otherwise he shall not be entitled to said sum.

"And for settling and ascertaining the value of such slaves,—

"It is further Voted and Resolved, That a committee of five be appointed, to wit: one from each county; any three of whom to be a quorum, to examine the slaves who shall be so inlisted, after they shall have passed muster, and to set a price upon each slave, according to his value, as aforesaid.

"It is further Voted and Resolved, That upon any able-bodied negro, mulatto, or Indian slave, inlisting as aforesaid, the officer who shall so inlist him, after he has passed muster as aforesaid, shall deliver a certificate thereof to the master or mistress of said negro, mulatto, or Indian slave; which shall discharge him from the service of said master or mistress as aforesaid.

"It is further Voted and Resolved, That the committee who shall estimate the value of any slave as aforesaid, shall give a certificate of the sum at which he may be valued, to the owner of said slave: and the General Treasurer of this State is hereby empowered and directed to give unto the owner of said slave his promissory note, as Treasurer, as aforesaid, for the sum of money at which he shall be valued as aforesaid, payable on demand, with interest, at the rate of six per cent per annum; and that said notes which shall be so given, shall be paid with the money which is due this state, and is expected from Congress,—the money which has been borrowed out of the General Treasury by this Assembly being first replaced."

The action of this regiment will be duly noticed when I come to speak of the conduct of negro soldiers.

Massachusetts fell into line soon after. On the 28th April, 1778, resolutions were passed on the Rhode Island basis, except they were still intermingled with white soldiers. (H. R., p. 162.) On June 5, 1781, John Cadwalder, writing from Annapolis, Maryland, to General Washington, says: "We have resolved to raise, immediately, seven hundred and fifty negroes to be incorporated with the other troops, and a bill is now almost completed." (H. R., p. 163.) Such was Maryland's action. On the 20th of March, 1781, our own State took official action. I read from a copy made from the laws of the State of New York.

"SECT. 6. And be it further enacted by the authority aforesaid, that any person who shall deliver one or more of his or her able-bodied male slaves to any warrant officer, as aforesaid, to serve in either of the said regiments or independent corps, and produce a certificate thereof, signed by any person authorized to muster and receive the men to be raised by virtue of this act, and produce such certificate to the Surveyor-General, shall, for every male slave so entered and mustered as aforesaid, be entitled to the location and grant of one right, in manner as in and by this act is directed; and shall be, and hereby is, discharged from any future maintenance of such slave, any law to the contrary notwithstanding: And such slave so entered as aforesaid, who shall for the term of three years or until regularly discharged, shall, immediately after such service or discharge, be, and is hereby declared to be, a free man of this state."—*Laws of the State of New York, chap. 32, (March 20, 1781, Fourth Session.)*

And although I have not been able to turn to any act of the legislature of Virginia on the subject of enrolling negro soldiers, I find abundant testimony to prove that they have been enrolled and had bravely borne their part in the struggle, and I find Virginia recognizing their claims to the gratitude of the nation. For when bad men would reduce them to slavery again after the war was over, I find an act of the General Assembly, in 1783, declaring all such slaves free, whether they enlisted as substitutes or not, proving beyond all question that such soldiers were common (H. R. 195). I close these notices of State action by reading a copy of an official paper, quoted by Mr. G. H. Moore, Librarian of the N. Y. Historical Society, in a pamphlet recently published. It gives the return of negroes in the main army under Washington's immediate command, two months after the battle of Monmouth. You will notice that States which I have not before mentioned are here represented, as North Carolina and Pennsylvania, showing that their action in no way differed from the others. See "Return."

As I have stated South Carolina and Georgia were the only States that did not use them as soldiers, and these were long urged by such noble citizens of these States as Col. Laurens the son of the President of the Continental Congress; Huger the ancestor of the present Rebel General, and such eminent men of the times as General Green, James Madison, Gen. Lincoln (H. R., p. 178), and our own illustrious but unfortunate Hamilton (Life of John Jay, by W. Jay, Vol. 2, pp. 31, 32.) Laurens was detached from Washing-

ton's staff, and commissioned as Lieutenant-Colonel, just before going to South Carolina to urge this measure—and little doubt exists but he meant to command negro troops he expected to raise himself (Journal of Congress, vol. 5, p. 123.) Indeed the command of these troops was sought for by the best men—such as Colonel Humphrey (Biog. Sketches of Distinguished Americans, H. R., p. 181.) Colonel Laurens, Captain Lane Laurens of Groton. The evidence that they were universally used, might be considered pretty conclusive without further quotations. I will however mention the testimony of a foreign officer in the service of Great Britain, who was with Burgoyne when he surrendered. (Historical R., pp. 142, 143.)

"From here to Springfield, there are few habitations which have not a negro family dwelling in a small house near by. The negroes are here as fruitful as other cattle. The young ones are well foddered, especially while they are still calves. Slavery is, moreover, very gainful. The negro is to be considered just as the bond-servant of the peasant. The negroes do all the coarse work of the house, and the little black young ones wait on the little white young ones. *The negro can take the field, instead of his master; and therefore no regiment is to be seen in which there are not negroes in abundance: and among them there are able-bodied, strong, and brave fellows.* Here, too, there are many families of free negroes, who live in good houses, have property, and live just like the rest of the inhabitants."—*Schloezer's Briefwechsel*, vol. iv., p. 365.

and close this part of the subject by reading the Proclamation of Sir Henry Clinton, issued June 30, 1779, (H. R., p. 175.)

PROCLAMATION.

"Whereas the enemy have adopted a practice of enrolling NEGROES among their troops, I do hereby give notice that all NEGROES taken in arms, or upon any military duty, shall be purchased for the public service at a stated price; the money to be paid to the captors.

"But I do most strictly forbid any person to sell or claim right over any NEGRO, the property of a rebel, who may take refuge with any part of this army: And I do promise to every NEGRO who shall desert the rebel standard, full security to follow within these lines, any occupation which he shall think proper."

Such, Mr. Speaker, were the opinions and practice of our ancestors on this great ques-

Return of Negroes in the Army, 24th Aug., 1778.

| Brigades. | P resent. | Sick. A bsent. | On com- mand. | Total. |
|----------------------|--------------|----------------------|------------------|--------|
| North Carolina,..... | 42 | 10 | 6 | 58 |
| Woodford,..... | 36 | 3 | 1 | 40 |
| Muhlenburg,..... | 64 | 26 | 8 | 98 |
| Smallwood,..... | 20 | 3 | 1 | 24 |
| 2d Maryland,..... | 43 | 15 | 2 | 60 |
| Wayne,..... | 2 | --- | --- | 2 |
| 2d Pennsylvania,.... | 33 | 1 | 1 | 35 |
| Clinton,..... | 33 | 2 | 4 | 39 |
| Parsons,..... | 117 | 12 | 19 | 148 |
| Huntington,..... | 56 | 2 | 4 | 62 |
| Nixon,..... | 26 | --- | 1 | 27 |
| Patterson,..... | 64 | 13 | 12 | 89 |
| Late Earned,..... | 34 | 4 | 8 | 46 |
| Poor,..... | 16 | 7 | 4 | 27 |
| Total,..... | 586 | 98 | 71 | 755 |

ALEX. SCAMMELL,
Adjutant-General.

tion, beginning with much of the prejudice against their employment which we have shown; but ending with their use almost everywhere, and they seem to have had a much better opinion of them after they had tried them than before. I now turn, Mr. Speaker, to the record of their conduct—to show that the confidence placed in them was well placed.

At the head of the list of colored heroes in the revolutionary war (for I will not go out of our own history for examples) I place the Negro Peter Salem, already mentioned as eulogized by Edward Everett, praised in the same sentence with Putnam, Prescott and Warren. I only mentioned him; I find fourteen officers uniting in a petition to the general court of Massachusetts setting forth the claims of another negro who fought in that battle, named Salem Poor, who, according to the testimony of these eye-witnesses, "behaved in the battle like an experienced officer as well as excellent soldier." They close by submitting the "reward due to so great and distinguished a character" to Congress. (Mass. Archives, vol. 180, p. 241, H. R., p. 122.)

These are certainly comprehensive phrases for intelligent men to use about a private soldier, and must have been called forth by very remarkable conduct. Captain Samuel Lawrence, of Groton, commanded a company of negroes.

"On one occasion, being out reconnoitring with this company, he got so far in advance of his command, that he was surrounded, and on the point of being made prisoner by the enemy. The men, soon discovering his peril, rushed to his rescue, and fought with the most determined bravery till that rescue was effectually secured. He never forgot this circumstance, and ever took especial pains to show kindness and hospitality to any individual of the colored race who came near his dwelling."—*Memoir of William Lawrence, by Rev. S. K. Lothrop, D. D.*, pp. 8, 9.

In the capture of Major-General Prescott, at Newport, on the night of July 9, 1777, negroes played an important part. I read H. R., pp. 143, 144.

"They landed about five miles from Newport, and three-quarters of a mile from the house, which they approached cautiously, avoiding the main guard, which was at some distance. *The Colonel went foremost, with a stout, active, negro close behind him, and another at a small distance: the rest followed so as to be near, but not seen.*

"A single sentinel at the door saw and hailed the Colonel: he answered by exclaiming against, and inquiring for, rebel prisoners, but kept slowly advancing. The sentinel again challenged him, and required the countersign. He said he had not the countersign; but amused the sentry by talking about rebel prisoners, and still advancing till he came within reach of the bayonet, which, he presenting, the colonel suddenly struck aside, and seized him. He was immediately secured, and ordered to be silent, on pain of instant death. *Meanwhile, the rest of the men surrounding the house, the negro, with his head, at the second stroke, forced a passage into it, and then into the landlord's apartment. The landlord at first refused to give the necessary intelligence; but, on the prospect of present death, he pointed to the General's chamber, which being instantly opened by the negro's head, the Colonel, calling the General by name, told him he was a prisoner.*"—*Pennsylvania Evening Post*, Aug. 7, 1777; (in *Frank Moore's Diary, of the American Revolution*, vol. i. p. 468.)

Also Dr. Thatcher's account on p. 145.

"*Albany*, Aug. 3, 1777.—The pleasing information is received here that Lieut.-Col. Barton, of the Rhode Island militia, planned a bold exploit for the purpose of surprising and taking Major Gen. Prescott, the com-

manding officer of the royal army at Newport. Taking with him, in the night, about forty men, in two boats, with oars muffled, he had the address to elude the vigilance of the ships of war and guard boats: and, having arrived undiscovered at the quarters of Gen. Prescott, they were taken for the sentinels; and the general was not alarmed till his captors were at the door of his lodging chamber, which was fast closed. *A negro man, named Prince, instantly thrust his beetle head through the panel door, and seized his victim while in bed.* * * This event is extremely honorable to the enterprising spirit of Col. Barton, and is considered as ample retaliation for the capture of Gen. Lee by Col. Harecourt. The event occasions great joy and exultation, as it puts in our possession an officer of equal rank with Gen. Lee, by which means an exchange may be obtained. Congress resolved that an elegant sword should be presented to Col. Barton for his brave exploit."

At the battle of Rhode Island the black regiment raised in that State, then under charge of Col. Green, fought desperately. Lafayette considered this one of the best fought battles of the revolution. And yet these negroes have the honor of gaining the day, according to Arnold, in his history of Rhode Island. (H. R., p. 158.)

"A third time the enemy, with desperate courage and increased strength, attempted to assail the redoubt, and would have carried it, but for the timely aid of two Continental battalions despatched by Sullivan to support his almost exhausted troops. It was in repelling these furious onsets, that the newly raised black regiment, under Col. Greene, distinguished itself by deeds of desperate valor. Posted behind a thicket in the valley, they three times drove back the Hessians, who charged repeatedly down the hill to dislodge them; and so determined were the enemy in these successive charges, that, the day after the battle, the Hessian colonel, upon whom this duty had devolved, applied to exchange his command, and go to New York, because he dared not lead his regiment again to battle, lest his men should shoot him for having caused them so much loss."—*Arnold's History of Rhode Island*, vol. ii. pp. 427, 428.

Also, H. R., p. 159. The after history of this regiment and the massacre of Col. Green.

Three years later, these soldiers are thus mentioned by the Marquis de Chastellux:—

"The 5th [of January, 1781] I did not set out till eleven, although I had thirty miles' journey to Lebanon. At the passage to the ferry, I met with a detachment of the Rhode Island regiment,—the same corps we had with us all the last summer; but they have since been recruited and clothed. The greatest part of them are negroes or mulattoes: but they are strong, robust men; and those I have seen had a very good appearance."—*Chastellux' Travels*, vol. i. p. 454; London, 1789.

"When Colonel Greene was surprised and murdered, near Points Bridge, New York, on the 14th of May, 1781, his colored soldiers heroically defended him till they were cut to pieces, and the enemy reached him over the dead bodies of his faithful negroes."

There surely could be no greater devotion to officers, or bravery in soldiers, than was here exhibited. A similar act, performed eleven years later, the defense of the Royal Family of France by the Swiss Guard (in the early days of the French Revolution), whom they protected until nearly all were slain by the mob, has been immortalized by history, poetry and sculpture. It was considered a deed that rivaled, if it did not surpass, Roman bravery. But this poor battalion of negroes equaled it, for their colonel was only reached over their dead bodies.

The infamous raid of Arnold upon New London in September, 1781, was signalized by another feat of negro daring. At the storming of the little earthwork called Fort Griswold, a Major Montgomery commanded the British.

After the English soldiers had worked their way over all obstructions, and were about to enter the fort, a negro, armed with a pike, ran it through the body of Montgomery while he was mounting the rampart, surrounded by his men. (Loring's Field Book, vol. 1, p. 612)

It was a negro slave that guided Wayne in his famous attack and capture of Stony Point; and this negro had so shrewdly conducted himself as to obtain much information of the first importance to the Americans. He first appeared at the fort soon after the British took possession, as a seller of fruit. After a while he pretended his master would not let him come in the day time, as it was the season for hoeing corn. Unwilling to lose their supply of fruit, the officers permitted him to come in the night, and regularly gave him the countersign. He was thus able to approach the outer sentinels on the night of attack, and they were seized without the slightest noise; and Wayne's forces were undiscovered until they were almost at the foot of the rampart. With a less ingenious and daring guide the whole force might have been annihilated. As it was, the loss was but 15 killed. (Loring's Field Book, vol. I, p. 744.)

Such instances of shrewdness and daring on the part of negro soldiers could be multiplied to almost any extent, if time were given to collect them. For almost every neighborhood, at all connected with the Revolution, has local traditions of faithful slaves, who shared in the hard fighting of those times, and in the respect and honor that was awarded to those heroes after the war was over.

I now turn to the records of the last war with Great Britain, and I find, Mr. Speaker, there was no distinction at all made in the navy between white and black. If a man were an able seaman or a brave and experienced cannonier, it made no difference with officers or shipmates what was the color of his skin. (H. R., App. A):

In the army, the course of the Government is so well known that very little need be said. Almost everywhere the services of negroes were solicited and welcomed. I read with peculiar pleasure part of an act of the Legislature of this State, entitled "An act to authorize the raising of two regiments of men of color," passed October 24, 1814. (H. R., App. C):

"SECT. 1. Be it enacted by the people of the State of New York, represented in Senate and Assembly, That the Governor of the state be, and he is hereby, authorized to raise, by voluntary enlistment, two regiments of free men of color, for the defence of the state for three years, unless sooner discharged."

"SECT. 6. And be it further enacted, That it shall be lawful for any able-bodied slave, with the written assent of his master or mistress, to enlist into the said corps; and the master or mistress of such slave shall be entitled to the pay and bounty allowed him for his service: and, further, that the said slave, at the time of receiving his discharge, shall be deemed and adjudged to have been legally manumitted from that time, and his said master or mistress shall not thenceforward be liable for his maintenance.

"SECT. 7. And be it further enacted, That every such enrolled person, who shall have become free by manumission or otherwise, if he shall thereafter become indigent, shall be deemed to be settled in the town in which the person who manumitted him was settled at the time

of such manumission, or in such other town where he shall have gained a settlement subsequent to his discharge from the said service; and the former owner or owners of such manumitted person, and his legal representatives, shall be exonerated from his maintenance, any law to the contrary hereof notwithstanding.

"SECT. 8. And be it further enacted, That when the troops to be raised as aforesaid shall be in the service of the United States, they shall be subject to the rules and articles which have been or may be hereafter established by the By-laws of the United States for the government of the army of the United States; that, when the said troops shall be in the service of the State of New York, they shall be subject to the same rules and regulations: And the Governor of the said state shall be, and he is hereby, authorized and directed to exercise all the power and authority which, by the said rules and articles, are required to be exercised by the President of the United States."—*Laws of the State of New York, passed at the Thirty-eight Session of the Legislature, chap. xviii.*

Jackson's Proclamation is familiar to every one acquainted with his career; but I will read it:

GENERAL JACKSON'S PROCLAMATION TO THE NEGROES.

HEADQUARTERS, SEVENTH MILITARY DISTRICT,
MOBILE, September 21, 1814.

To the Free Colored Inhabitants of Louisiana.

Through a mistaken policy, you have heretofore been deprived of a participation in the glorious struggle for national rights in which our country is engaged. This no longer shall exist.

As sons of freedom, you are now called upon to defend our most inestimable blessing. As Americans, your country looks with confidence to her adopted children for a valorous support, as a faithful return for the advantages enjoyed under her mild and equitable government. As fathers, husbands, and brothers, you are summoned to rally around the standard of the Eagle, to defend all which is dear in existence.

Your country, although calling for your exertions, does not wish you to engage in her cause without amply remunerating you for the services rendered. Your intelligent minds are not to be led away by false representations. Your love of honor would cause you to despise the man who should attempt to deceive you. In the sincerity of a soldier and the language of truth I address you.

To every noble-hearted, generous freeman of color volunteering to serve during the present contest with Great Britain, and no longer, there will be paid the same bounty, in money and lands, now received by the white soldiers of the United States, viz.: one hundred and twenty-four dollars in money, and one hundred and sixty acres of land. The non-commissioned officers and privates will also be entitled to the same monthly pay, and daily rations, and clothes, furnished to any American soldier.

On enrolling yourselves in companies, the Major-General commanding will select officers for your government from your white fellow-citizens. Your non-commissioned officers will be appointed from among yourselves.

Due regard will be paid to the feelings of freemen and soldiers. You will not, by being associated with white men in the same corps, be exposed to improper comparisons or unjust sarcasm. As a distinct, independent battalion or regiment, pursuing the path of glory, you will, undivided receive the applause and gratitude of your countrymen.

To assure you of the sincerity of my intentions, and my anxiety to engage your invaluable services to our country, I have communicated my wishes to the Governor of Louisiana, who is fully informed as to the manner of enrollment, and will give you every necessary information on the subject of this address.

ANDREW JACKSON,
Major-General Commanding.

—*Niles's Register*, vol. vii. p. 205.

Such, Mr. Speaker and gentlemen, is the historical evidence as to the opinions and practice of this country. It exhibits the gradual growth of opinion, from prejudice to favor, in men who permitted themselves to be taught by experience

—men who had the best interests of the country at heart. It surely affords precedent enough to guide us, if not to govern us. It clearly shows, at least, that we enter on no doubtful experiment in enlisting them, and that we can safely trust their bravery in battle.

As regards our use of them in the present war: Let us glance at a few aspects of the case that are peculiar to our present circumstances, and which could not have had influence with our Revolutionary sires.

1. It certainly seems right that, where their owners have plunged us into this terrible war on their account—in order to postpone indefinitely the day of emancipation that seemed to be dawning—they should share in the toil and dangers of making themselves free. This is only in accordance with the general principles that govern human transactions. Whatever is for the benefit of the whole, the whole must sacrifice to accomplish. There is nothing whatever in the relation of the races that imposes upon us the duty of expending blood and treasure which will eventually benefit them, and they sacrifice nothing. If we are successful in this war, they share equally with us in the benefit. If we fail, they are still benefited, for they will have gained the priceless boon of liberty.

2. Their use as soldiers would place us more on an equality with Rebel troops in many respects where they now have the advantage. In the knowledge of the country—its winding streams, its intricate paths, its numerous swamps—the Rebel soldiers now possess decided advantages which no stubborn bravery on our part will counterbalance. The disasters of the war have, in many instances, been occasioned by this very knowledge on their part, and ignorance of it on ours. The use of these freed men as soldiers gives us this knowledge as fully as they possess it. Even more so; for it is universally known that the negroes possess the most intimate knowledge of every road, and bypath, and ford, and swamp, for miles from their homes.

Another advantage the Rebels possess is acclimation. The Rebels resist the influence of malaria to a much greater degree than we can; and they are able to endure the effects of heat much more. It has been noticed by the Rebels themselves, that their victories have been won in hot weather. But in this power of resisting the influence of climate and enduring fatigue in hot weather, their negroes, by nature and by habit, far surpass them.

The Southerner has to leave his home for certain months in the year, while his slaves all that time endure the greatest exposure to the sun and the dew, with labor from daylight to dark, and yet enjoy better health and longer life than the white man; so that the negro is admirably fitted to bear the exposure of the camp, and the fort, and the picket, in that climate, which has always been so fatal to the white man. This, you will notice, is the plea of the French Emperor, as an excuse for bringing negroes from Egypt to man the forts conquered in Mexico. "It is (said he) in the interests of humanity" to employ the negro

as a soldier in the South, from his ability to resist malaria and endure fatigue under fierce heat. His labor and endurance as a soldier would be play to him compared with the labor of the corn or cotton field.

We can thus oppose to our enemies an army that could resist greater heat and endure under it greater fatigue, and who would know the country—every path by which an army could be flanked, and every elevation where a battery could be advantageously placed—far better than the Rebels themselves. The "interests of humanity"—of black as well as white humanity—certainly favor their use.

As regards their fitness to become soldiers, it is the opinion of very many that their whole previous training would benefit them in some respects, while it would undoubtedly injure them in others. It would benefit them in preparing them for discipline. An officer desires his regiment to obey his will, just as though it were a machine. He wishes them to be so obedient that he can precipitate them upon any place or point he wishes, just as he could the shot from his batteries. Now the whole training of this people fits them to be at once so disciplined. They have always obeyed another's will in everything; so it would be nothing new. As to their bravery, the experience of the two wars in which we have used them establishes that beyond question. Those used in the Revolutionary war were situated exactly as those in the South are now; *i. e.*, they had been previously slaves.

There is a fact concerning the African race not generally known, which I will here mention. A friend has ascertained it for me from one of the first scholars in the country, who has made the races of men his peculiar study; and that the opinion may not be subjected to the suspicion of being biased by political views, I would add that this scholar is a foreigner, with no interest in politics. The fact is this: That the African race is physically the most powerful race in the world. The vital powers and forces are most strongly developed in them; so that, in a climate at all congenial, they can perform more labor, endure more privations, and resist more influences that produce disease, than any other race on the globe. This is proved by their whole history, even that portion of it passed in this country; for they have increased rapidly in a state of slavery, where any other race—Indians, for instance—would as rapidly die out.

They are also naturally a fierce race, reckless of danger and where they possess self-respect would make the best soldiers in the world.

Of course, in a state of servitude, this self-respect has been almost crushed out. It would be the case with white men if they were slaves for several generations. A soldier's life would soon restore this. Every day would show him his fitness for such a position, and arouse his pride. He would see a new career open to him; one in which he could rise from the position of a chattel to the dignity of a man.

Thus you see, Mr. Speaker, we have Right, Expediency and Nature, all in favor of our using

them, three arguments that on any other question would be conclusive.

One thing more, Mr. Speaker. Here is possibly the career which, in the providence of God, is designed for this unfortunate people. The rebellion makes it necessary to garrison Southern forts for a long period and to keep on foot a standing army of considerable number.

We have all at once had imposed upon us, by this rebellion, some of the burdens of the governments of Europe. We cannot keep a white army on Southern soil without a fearful expense of life—lives that are valuable, and, indeed, are necessary to our prosperity in the peaceful pursuits of Commerce, Manufactures and Agriculture, we have no men to spare.

But let us use the negro, as all European governments do in similar climates, and we can man forts and sustain standing armies, with economy to ourselves and vast benefit to the negro, for they would enjoy health where northern men would soon die, and bear fatigue where white men would break down, and the duties of the soldier's life would be like a holiday to them compared with the labors of Slavery; and there is no other position in which we can place them in which they would so soon learn to respect themselves and thus fit them to be valuable citizens. A short term of service as a soldier would go far to do away with the degradation of Slavery.

For these and similar reasons, Mr. Speaker, I consider the policy of the Government on this subject, as a wise one. Other gentlemen think differently, but I have heard few good reasons for their opinions. We have had abundance of appeals to passion but few good reasons; one thing is certain, if this Government is to be preserved and brought out of its present difficulties it will be done by the very part of the Government that puts forth this policy as their line of action. They have been chosen as an executive arm for the very purpose of acting.

Gentlemen, in denouncing this policy, have talked as though they themselves were about to act in the matter. They seem to forget that none but those already chosen can act with right; any self-constituted actor is in rebellion; any talk of such action is rebellious in its tendency. When our Government is once lawfully chosen then it is the only power, the God of nations guiding and helping it, that can bring us through trials and out of difficulties. In view of that fact the duty of citizens is plain. It is to strengthen the hands of Government by a united and cheerful support. He may think differently about the wisdom of some measures, but will not, if he is a good citizen, abate one jot of the support he gives the Government and which support enables it to accomplish enterprises that without it would fail. Every man who seeks to divide the sentiment of the People is doing Jeff. Davis' work, and, as far as the good of the country is concerned, had better be in the councils of the rebellious States, or in some of the rebellious armies. What if mistakes have been made, which, by-the-by I very much doubt. But it

would be wonderful if there were none made where there have been so many traitors.

The Government has arrested men and imprisoned them, and then, without trial, released them; and some of these are clamorous to be tried; but such gentlemen had better be a little careful, perhaps the Government may find time to try them some of these days. I have understood that in every such case, the Government had the best of proof that these parties were concocting what would be of benefit to the rebellion, and the Government just held them long enough to spoil their plans. Besides, the gentlemen who talk so fiercely about violated freedom, tyranny, &c., seem to forget that the doors of the forts were repeatedly opened and the incarcerated might walk out, if they would take the oath of allegiance; and they forget, also, that these same parties repeatedly refused. It was certainly a very simple way of clearing off all suspicion. A loyal man would take the oath of allegiance every morning, if the Government wished it; and only a traitor at heart would refuse to take it whenever required.

Gentlemen who fiercely denounce the Government as worse than the tyranny of the Middle Ages, forget that for just such words spoken, not in public or in earnest, but in private and in jest, men have lost their lives during those Middle Ages. Louis Napoleon sent his emissaries through the streets of Paris, shooting into every crowd in order to inspire fear and submission. These are the actions of tyrants.

But here a man may be implicated in shooting down soldiers, while passing through the streets of a city on their way to protect the Capital of the country; or the Government may be morally certain that he was engaged in burning bridges and tearing up the railway by which reinforcements and supplies were to be received. And because he is arrested, and imprisoned awhile, and then in the clemency of the Government discharged, without pressing the matter to a trial, men work themselves into a mock fury about the *habeas corpus*. A man may be a spy, and when caught and imprisoned, is released whenever he will take the oath of allegiance. The very noise these liberated men and their friends make prove them to be enemies to the Government in this great struggle. I have no doubt, Mr. Speaker, that ten spies and traitors have escaped punishment for one innocent man who has been suspected, much less imprisoned.

A calm, united, unwavering, unchanging support of the Government, whatever measures it may, in its wisdom and patriotism, deem necessary to take, is our only hope. Every other course weakens, and a man might better be in the ranks of the rebels than clogging the wheels of the Government here, by petty fault findings and miserable detraction which, above all things, demeans man in the eye of his fellows.

If we unite in a hearty support of the Government in accomplishing the work we have given them to do, we must be triumphant. You might as well, Mr. Speaker, attempt to stop one of the planets in its course as this powerful and free

North in the accomplishment of any righteous purpose. We are wading through a red sea of blood, it is true, and the wilderness that follows may be long, but, Mr. Speaker, we will one day reach the promised land, where, as a free people, with not a man in bonds, save for crime, on our part of the Continent. Our glorious plan of Government shall accomplish its high destiny, when peace and prosperity and rational liberty shall invite every lover of peace and liberty from every other land to this one, and our broad terri-

tory, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, from the St. Lawrence to the Gulf shall resound with the busy hum of Industry, every note of which, every smiling field and busy factory, and white sail of commerce shall praise the generation that rescued this heritage from the polluting grasp of traitors, giving to the world in a new and beautified form the second edition of American Independence which shall continue to be in the future, as in the past, the Political Text Book of the Nations.

